



BOARD OF CORRECTIONS MEETING — JULY 2017

Meeting. The Board of Corrections met July 7, 2017, at the Fourth Judicial District office in Council Bluffs and were welcomed by Director Kip Shanks. Director Shanks highlighted the District's purchase of a transitional home in 2013 to meet the needs of disabled individuals being released from prison. Those individuals need a place to live and time to be reinstated for disability payments. Seven parolees can live at the house at a time. In total there have been 39 individuals housed there since its opening. The average placement lasts 90 days. Director Shanks also explained that the Fourth Judicial District used to have a total of 1,250-1,300 offenders under supervision. There were concerns regarding the unsupervised paroled offender population, so an informal probation program was developed to incorporate those individuals. Currently there are 3,079 offenders under supervision in the Fourth Judicial District.

Institutions. Department of Corrections (DOC) Deputy Director for Institutions Dan Craig provided an update of activity and items of interest since the last meeting, including the following:

- There was a security audit and vulnerability assessment conducted at the Iowa Medical and Classification Center at Oakdale, which concluded with good results.
- Anamosa State Penitentiary held a graduation ceremony for offenders.
- The monthly district directors' meeting was held on June 15. Currently a focus is the legislative changes in Iowa Code chapter [20](#).
- The monthly wardens' meeting was held on June 27. Most of their focus is also on legislative changes to Iowa Code chapter [20](#) policies and procedures.
- A statewide Safety Officer has been nominated for an Excellence in Safety award.
- Statewide labor/management meetings will no longer take place because they are not a part of the labor contract due to changes in Iowa Code chapter [20](#).
- Discussions have been held about the closure of Luster Heights Unit and disposition of that property. Since the facility and grounds are owned by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the facility is being turned back over to the DNR for maintenance.
- August 1 will mark the 20th anniversary for the Newton Correctional Facility.
- A big challenge facing the DOC is recruitment and retention of nurses. The DOC is not able to compete with private medical facilities currently offering signing and retention bonuses and educational loan forgiveness. Also, the issue of overtime compensation has been affected by legislative changes to Iowa Code chapter [20](#). A waiver has been requested from the Department of Administrative Services regarding the overtime compensation issue.
- There was a large fight in the yard of the Iowa State Penitentiary involving around 50 inmates. Staff was not targeted and was able to deescalate the situation. An investigation is still ongoing.

Health Services. Department of Corrections Health Services Administrator Dr. Jerome Greenfield, DOC Medical Director Dr. Steven Cook, and DOC Administrator of Nursing Kathy Weiss gave the following update on health services within the institutions:

- Over the last year there has been a 50.0% drop in complaints against doctors and a 65.0% drop in complaints over the last three years. Administrator Kathy Weiss addressed nursing issues. During FY 2017, 43 registered nurses left the DOC, and 19 of these positions are still vacant. Recruiting challenges include scheduling, compensation, having to work overtime, and upcoming changes to benefits as a result of the legislative changes to Iowa Code chapter [20](#).

- There are a number of patients in DOC institutions with diagnoses related to opiate addiction. One problem is that offenders who have an addiction to opiates may be released from an institution and resume usage at the same levels as before their incarceration, which can be lethal. The DOC has received a \$2.0 million grant to work with addicts leaving prison.
- Around one-third of inmates have severe mental health issues. Cost of medications continues to be a concern. The DOC has started mental health first aid training for correctional officers to increase education, and older inmates are receiving some training to work with younger inmates. This training includes nonmedical management techniques.
- Hepatitis C drug therapy cost continues to be a concern. In FY 2017 the total cost included about \$1.0 million to treat 16 patients with hepatitis C. Iowa is one of 30 states that screen inmates for hepatitis C.
- In general, an aging offender population will mean that total drug costs will continue to increase. Currently 94 people account for about \$2.4 million of the total \$6.6 million of pharmacy costs incurred in FY 2017.

Budget. Department of Corrections Financial Manager Steve Dick gave a budget update. He reiterated that FY 2017 has been a challenging year with cuts in funding and internal shuffling due to closure of facilities. Several things have been done to minimize overtime at institutions, and the average overtime cost per pay period is now \$170,000. So far in FY 2018 there have been 140 fewer FTE positions loaded into the budget, which makes operations challenging.

Mr. Dick stated that he has not been made aware of additional cuts that may need to be made in FY 2018 due to State revenues being less than forecast, and that drastic changes would need to occur if additional cuts were requested. There should be some savings on health care during the second half of FY 2018, but it remains to be seen how much that will be, and it is unknown whether the DOC will be able to utilize any savings or whether the State will take any savings back. There has been a lot of uncertainty and change for DOC staff. Work on the FY 2019 budget request is being done with the goal of trying to maintain status quo.

Action items for the Board included:

- Approving an expenditure of \$530,087 from the offender telephone rebate account for education programs, administration of the telephone program, and translation services.
- Approving a policy on parole violation review and revocation processes related to attempts to decrease the cost of county confinements.
- Approving a policy for the K-9 program related to training and using K-9s for cell inspection.

Next Meeting. The next Board meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on August 4, 2017, at the Clarinda Correctional Facility. For additional information, see the DOC website: <http://www.doc.state.ia.us/BoardOfCorrections>.

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